

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 SSC-01 OMB-01 EB-08 OES-07
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O 241730Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7496
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USNMR SHAPE BEL
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0796

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC
USCINCEUR FOR POLAD
USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CY
SUBJECT: KONUK RESIGNS AS PRIMIN AND FROM NATIONAL UNITY PARTY

1. TFSC "PRIME MINISTER" NECAT KONUK SUBMITTED HIS
RESIGNATION AS PRIME MINISTER AND AS A MEMBER OF THE
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GOVERNING NATIONAL UNITY PARTY (NUP) ON MARCH 24.
KONUK, WHO WAS ALSO NUP CHAIRMAN, ANNOUNCED HE WOULD
REMAIN IN THE ASSEMBLY AS AN INDEPENDENT DEPUTY.
HOWEVER TFSC "PRESIDENT" DENKTASH TOLD REPORTERS
LATER THAT HE WOULD NOT DECIDE WHETHER TO ACCEPT
KONUK'S RESIGNATION AS PRIMIN UNTIL AFTER CONSULTING
THE NUP PARTY COUNCIL AND OTHER PARTY ORGANS.

2. KONUK GAVE AS THE REASON FOR HIS RESIGNATION LACK OF TOTAL SOLIDARITY WITHIN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THE NUP ASSEMBLY GROUP ON MEASURES (WE ASSUME MOSTLY DOMESTIC) THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO ADOPT. HE CITED THE OBJECTIONS RAISED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO INCREASE COST OF FUEL OIL AND DIESEL OIL AND POINTED OUT THAT GOVERNMENT DEPUTIES HAD EVEN PARTICIPATED IN A MARCH 22 DEMONSTRATION BY FARMERS PROTESTING THE PRICE RISES. (AMONG THE DEPUTIES WAS NUP DEPSEC GEN RAIF DENKTASH, SON OF THE PRESIDENT).

3. COMMENT. OUR READING OF THE TFSC CONSTITUTION IS THAT REST OF THE CABINET DOES NOT NECESSARILY RESIGN NOR IS THERE A PROHIBITION AGAINST KONUK CONTINUING AS PRIMIN AS AN INDEPENDENT. LOCAL POLITICAL OBSERVERS INFORM US THAT A GROUP OF NUP DEPUTIES HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO FORCE KONUK'S RESIGNATION AND THAT PARTICIPATION BY SEVERAL NUP DEPUTIES IN THE FARMERS' PROTEST RALLY WAS ENGINEERED BY RAIF DENKTASH, MINAG IRSEN KUCHUK AND MININTERIOR AND NUP SEC GEN ORHAN ZIHNI BILGEHAN. (BILGEHAN WAS A LEADING CONTENDER FOR APPOINTMENT AS PRIMIN AND WAS EMBITTERED AT NOT RECEIVING THE NOD.) IF DENKTASH ACCEPTS KONUK'S RESIGNATION, BILGEHAN AGAIN EMERGES AS A LEADING CONTENDER.

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4. KONUK'S RESIGNATION TAKES PLACE DESPITE VIGOROUS, DISCREET EFFORTS BY GOT AND TURKISH EMBASSY TO PERSUADE HIM TO REMAIN IN OFFICE, BOTH BECAUSE THEY VALUE WHAT THEY REGARD AS HIS QUIET COMPETENCE AND TO PRESERVE THE FACADE OF UNITY IN TFSC LEADERSHIP.
CRAWFORD

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